

REMARKS

Claims 1-6, 8-14 and 16-20 remain in this application. Claims 1-20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103 as obvious over WO 99/34749 (Webster).

Independent claims 1 and 6 have been amended to recite that during the expansion/insertion of the stent and graft, the retaining flange of the second graft retains a portion of the second graft within the first graft. As explained in the specification for instance with respect to the embodiment of Figure 4, the flange prevents the second graft from slipping through the opening in the first graft. No such structure is disclosed or suggested in the Webster patent. The stent insertion does not include or suggest a retaining flange. Therefore, the obviousness rejection of claims 1 and 6 is believed overcome and should be withdrawn.

Claims 2-5, 8, and 9 depend from independent claims 1 and 6 and are therefore believed patentable for at least the same reasons that the independent claims are believed patentable.

Independent claims 10, 12 and 16 are currently directed to placement of a bifurcated stent or graft. In the method of claim 10, the delivery sheaths having coaxial portions are together inserted over the first and second guidewires so one delivery sheath is in one vessel region and the other delivery sheath is in the other vessel region. Then the delivery catheter can be removed to expose the delivery sheaths. This method is not disclosed or suggested in the Webster patent. In Webster, the stent has a hole as he explains his invention:

The key modification [of known self-expanding stents] being the requirement for a gap or hole in the stent at a point in its side, and through which a guidewire and stent delivery system may pass. (see page 7)

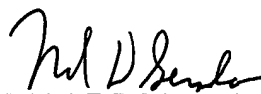
Webster does not suggest the claimed method for delivering a bifurcated stent or graft. In fact, there is no need for a side hole in the claimed invention of claims 10, 12 and 16. If Webster was to eliminate his side hole, then he could not deliver his stent. Additionally, Webster delivers his delivery sheath through the side hole. Moreover, eliminating the side hole is directly counter to the “key” of Webster’s invention. In the present claimed invention of claims 10, 12 and 16, the delivery sheaths are together placed in the respective vessel regions and there is no need to direct a sheath through a side opening. Note the claims set forth the sequential steps of the method. Therefore, Applicants submit that the rejection of these claims should be withdrawn.

Claims 11, 13, 14 and 17-20 depend from independent claims 10, 12 or 16 and are therefore believed patentable for at least the same reasons that independent claims 10, 12, and 16 are believed patentable.

Applicants respectfully submit that this application is now in condition for allowance. Prompt and favorable reconsideration of the present application is respectfully requested. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned should the Examiner believe it would expedite prosecution.

Respectfully submitted,

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